

Abstract

A sanitized dispensing mechanism mounted to a vending machine includes a receptacle, a barrier and an actuating device. The receptacle has an interior chamber and a rear opening behind the interior chamber through which an item discharged from an exterior opening of the vending machine is received into the interior chamber. The barrier is mounted across the receptacle above a bottom opening below the interior chamber and, in response to a user moving the actuating device between first and second positions, is moved between receiving and dispensing positions. In the receiving position, the barrier receives and retains the item in the interior chamber blocking it from dropping through the bottom opening. In the dispensing position, the barrier releases the item from the interior chamber allowing it to drop through the bottom opening onto a user's hand.